

(8)

A LETTER

FROM A

MEMBER

OF THE

HOUSE of COMMONS,

(One of the Committee appointed to enquire into the Affairs of the Charitable Corporation) to his Friends, (some Merchants) at *Rome*.

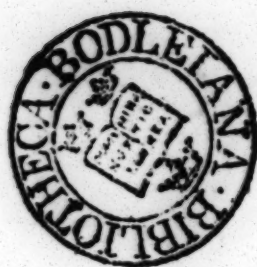
In which is reveal'd the Secret Means used by some of the Committee-Men, Assistance, and Servants of the said Corporation, for Embezzling the Stock.

Publish'd for the Use of the Unhappy Sufferers.

L O N D O N :

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A

LETTER

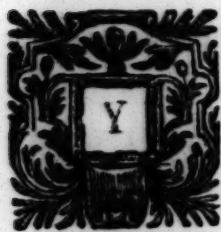
FROM A

Member of Parliament

TO HIS

Correspondents at *ROME*.

GENTLEMEN,



OUR Cobweb-Artifice, set forth in a Letter from *Rome*, dated *May* the 4th, 1732; *N. S.* and signed *John Angelo Belloni*, is as ridiculous as *D——n Swift's Bandbox-Plot* in the Reign of the late Queen *Anne*; we can easily see that it was calculated for the Meridian of *Great Britain*, and with specious Pretences of doing Justice to the plundered Members of the *Charitable Corporation*, and false Notions of Friendship in general, to alienate the Minds

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and Affections of his Sacred Majesty King GEORGE the II's Subjects. It is a Composition of the *Superbe*, the *Arrogant*, and the *Stupid*; and has met with such an Indignation and Resentment as that very numerical Libel deserved; and as your *fugitive Hero* takes great Delight in *Raree-shows*, I heartily wish he had been a Spectator of the *flaming* Figure it made with his *Mahometan* [*] Sabre, adorned with Rubies and Pearls, girded about his Loins. However, I must acknowledge that your doughty Performance had a *miraculous* Effect, for it put your principal Agent, *Fog*, and his Non-juring mercenary *Scaramouches*, with the whole *Danverian* Tribe to the *Blush*. What was your Council of Loggerheads doing when you suffered such an unlik'd Monster to come into the World? Had you consulted Old *Infallibility*, he would certainly have advised you to have stifled it in the Embryo. ----- *Monstrum, horrendum, ingens, cui forma est lumen ademptum.*

Pray, Gentlemen, give my Service to the *Chevalier* of the *Ginger-bread Countenance*, and tell him, that the insolent and audacious Letter, which by the unanimous Concurrence of both Houses of Parliament, was
burned

[*] A rich Sabre or Scymetre, presented to him by his Father-in-Law, Prince *James Sobieski*, taken from the *Turks* by King *John Sobieski* at the raising the Siege of *Vienna*.

burned by the Hands of the Common Hangman, has made many more Profelytes than he imagines; and I advise him not to send another from the same Mint, for if he takes a second Step so very impolitick as the former, he may depend upon losing the Hearts of those poor abandoned *Few* that still espouse his Cause clandestinely.

If I am rightly informed *Signor Belloni*, who is the *nominal*, and may be the *real* Banker of the *Knight Mendicant*, when he is able to deposite in his Hands an hundred *Roman Crowns*, which he can justly call his *own*, and his Debts paid; I say, if my Information be right, this *Signor Belloni* boasts, and offers to prove that he is of *divine* Extraction, being descended in a direct Line from *Bellona*, the old *Roman* Goddess of War. Now, Gentlemen, if this be the Case, he has a Claim by *Jure divino* to all the Territories of the *Holy See*, and what will become of the present *Pontiff* and all his Predecessors? must you not acknowledge them to have been Usurpers? and if you adhere to your favourite Tenet, you are obliged to assist him in obtaining the Possession of his indubitable Right. But, *Maria*, what a large Demand has he upon *Rome* for Arrears! I am apprehensive, that could your *Papa* call in all the *Peter-Pence*, which he insists upon to be due to him from *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, nay, if the Castle
of

of *St. Angelo* was filled with Diamonds, there would be a vast Deficiency in the Accompt. Besides, as this *Signor Belloni* is a Man of a *Warlike* Disposition, which his Name imports, and he must needs be so if his Birth be not spurious, I counsel your *petit Maitre* not to suffer him in his Presence; for should he draw his *Italian Dagger*, it may cast the pusillanimous Hero into Convulsions, and thereby deprive him of the *Fag-end* of Sense and Reason which Nature gave him; at least, he would certainly *paw paw* his Breeches, as a certain Monarch of the same Name did constantly when he heard the Noise of a Cannon, or saw a naked Weapon. And here by the By, I must observe, that the Cowardice of Master *Jenny* is the strongest Argument that ever was brought to prove him to be the Son of King *James* the Second; tho' for my Part, I sincerely declare, that I pin my Faith as much upon the *Alcoran* or *Translation*, as I do upon your *Run-away Chevalier's* being the Offspring of the unhappy Monarch, last mention'd.

I advise him also, not to stir out of *Italy*, for a *Traumontane* Air is more agreeable to his weak Constitution and Understanding than *Somerset-house*, or the *Highlands of Scotland*. You see how careful I am in the Preservation of his Health, and if he has any Gratitude, he will make a Present to me when he is able.

Let

Let him avoid for the future the like Occasion he gave of being call'd the *Dupe* of *Europe*, by suffering himself to be a *Shuttle-Cock*, a *Tennis-Ball*, tossed about for Diversion, or to serve the Turn of any Monarch.

Would any Man, who has three Grains of Wit or Reason go so *rusticate*, when the Person, on whom he relies for Subsistence, is on the Margine of the unfathomable Abyss, and expects every Hour to launch forth into Eternity? Let me counsel him to return speedily, and attend the crazy *Pontiff*, otherwise he may lose a good Legacy, and perhaps be struck off from his Pension.

I advise him to get a Patent for Life from the gouty Vicar of *Ch—st*, to make him Superindant of the Curtezans in *Rome*; this is a Place of great Profit, and he will then have an Opportunity of furnishing a Friend with a *Tit-Bit*.

If he has a Mind to *Sleep in a whole Skin*, which I take to be most agreeable to his feminine Nature, I counsel him not to attempt to set a Foot in *Great Britain*, for his Behaviour in the *Highlands* (for which he ought to have hanged his beloved Cousin *Marr*) has exasperated the Remnant of the Friends he had in those Days to such a Degree, that they will be apt to deliver up; besides, the Reward of one hundred thousand Pounds will prove a Temptation too strong to be resisted by them.

Let.

Let him not depend upon the Cavils and Bickerings of the Protestants, for whatever private Piques they may have against each other in respect to Party-Affairs, yet they will never suffer *Popery* in *Great Britain*. When the Interest of their King, their Country, and the Subjects are in Danger, they will unite as one Man, and exert themselves in their Defence; the *Abbey Lands* are so widely diffused, that scarce a Family of Note is without some of them, and from which they will never part but with their Lives: Notwithstanding what a learned *Scaramouch*, within ten Miles of *Hammer-smith*, was pleased to assert, *viz.* *That we have had no good Times since the Laity were permitted to read the Bible, and every Man will have a Canker in his Estate, 'till he restores the Church-Lands.* Here's a *Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*; do not his Words plainly demonstrate, that he means the *Church of Rome*? does he not thereby tacitly acknowledge himself to be a Member of that Church? *Woe unto you, Hypocrite!*

I have much more to add, but as the Post is going out, I have Time only to let you know, that, Gentlemen, you may possibly hear more of me upon this Subject at another Opportunity.

There are two Things upon the Carpet which I shall give you a conscie Account of, *viz.* the Preparations for War in *Spain*, or as some call it, the *Spanish Armado*, and the miserable

miserable Affairs of the *Charitable Corporation* in *London*, which have afforded sufficient Grounds for Speculation among our Politicians, particularly the *Wou'd-be's*, with which this Metropolis and the City of *Westminster* abound, from a *Shoemaker* in a Garret to the *Drabs* at *Billingsgate*, the *Cynder-Wenches* in a *Dust-Cart*, and the *Mumpers* in a *Geneva-Shop*, who think they have as much right to box *Politicks* as a Pedant to chop *Logick*.

The Design of the *Spanish* Armament is carried on with a Secrecy adequate to the Gravity of the *Spaniards*, nor can any Man penetrate so far into it, as to give himself the least Assurance where the Thunder will break forth; we must therefore leave the Issue of this grand Affair to the Discovery which Time will make.

I am very sensible, that you can not be ranged under the Class of the *Quid nunc's*, you are very far from being an *Inquisitive* Gentleman; but methinks it would be a strong Argument of Indolence and Supineness in you, not to be able to satisfy any Gentleman at *Rome* in a Question that may be put to you, concerning the deplorable Circumstances of the unhappy Adventurers in the *Charitable Corporation*, which has spread itself through most Parts of *Europe*, and has been the Destruction of more Families, than the fatal Management of the *South-Sea Scheme* in the Year 1720.

B

To

To elucidate this Matter, I must have a Retrospect to the Original Charter of that *Corporation*, which was granted in the Reign of *Queen Anne*, and cost the Proprietor, as he has assured me, five hundred Pounds. The Intent of that *Charter* or *Royal Licence* was to relieve the industrious Poor, by lending them *small Sums* of Money upon Pledges at common Interest, and to supply such as were extremely Indigent without demanding or receiving any Interest from them; the Capital Stock or Fund for carrying on this Business was limited to thirty thousand Pounds. Pursuant hereunto, a House was taken in *Duke-Street* in *Westminster*, where Pledges were left for such Sums of Money as the Parties concerned could agree; but by an unhappy Accident, which I on purpose decline mentioning, the House was shut up, and another taken in *Spring-Garden*, near *Charing-Cross*, but very little) if any) Business was negotiated there for some Years.

The Affairs of the *Corporation* being stagnated, House-Rent, Servant's Wages, &c. unpaid, the Proprietor *at last* took a prudent Step, in assigning over his Property in the said *Royal Licence* to several Persons for a valuable Consideration, reserving nevertheless a Place of Profit to himself. The trading Stock was soon increased to forty thousand Pounds, and from thence to six hundred Thousand, as will appear in another

ther part of this Letter. The Affairs of the *Corporation* now gained new Life, a General Court was call'd regularly, as often as it was specified in the Patent; Committees, and Courts of Assistants were chosen; a Cashire, other Officers and Servants appointed; in short, the Company's Business went swimmingly on, to the great Emolument of many who were concerned therein, and very wisely drew out in Time, but to the great Detriment, and even the total Ruin of many fair and honest Tradesmen, and others.

Persons of very great Rank and Figure were not ashamed to be concerned herein, because they could make *Ten per Cent.* at least of their Money; but as Avarice often draws a Veil over the Understanding of those who are greedy of accumulating Wealth, even by the most scandalous and indirect Practices, so it fared with some of the Committee and Assistants, who in Violation of the Trust that was reposed in them, entered into a Combination, or Copartnership, to enrich themselves, and improve in a Multitude of his Majesty's Subjects by false and specious Pretences.

To effect this notorious piece of Villany, the said Committee-Men and Assistants issued out Cash-Notes and Bonds, without the Authority or Consent of a General Court of the Corporation, which was not only a Breach of Trust, but an Imposition

the Publick, and a principal Cause of the Loss sustained by the said Corporation. But not content with such fraudulent Actions, they proceeded to a further Length, and made Reports to the several General Courts that were called for declaring Dividends, that they had cast up the Company's Accompts, examin'd their Books, and considered their Profits, although they had not at that Time inspected the Ware-houses, to see whether they had any Pledges that would answer the several large Sums of Money lent; nay, they sometimes made a Report without having seen any Accompt whatsoever, all which they did on purpose to induce the General Courts to make large Dividends, and thereby give the People a false Notion of the Value of the Shares of the said Corporation, that some of the Committee and Assistants, I mean the *Complotters*, might dispose (as they actually did) of their own Shares at an exorbitant Price.

Having carried on their Villanies for some Years, they obtained several Grants or Licences for augmenting their Capital to three hundred Thousand, and afterwards to six hundred thousand Pounds, which they procured by Misrepresentations and false Suggestions, without any Order from a General Court, or Court of Committee, in a clandestine manner; and after they had obtained such Licences from the Crown, they kept them secret for some Months, for the private Advantage

vantage of themselves, and their Agents, during which Time they bought great Number of Shares, which they sold again at a very advanced Price.

Besides, contrary to the Intent and Meaning of the Charter of the *Charitable Corporation*, they empower'd the Officers of their Warehouse in *Fenchurch-Street* to lend Sums of Money upon Pledges, particularly *John Thomson* was authorized to lend as far as two thousand Pounds upon one Pledge, or more at his Discretion. Add to this their Remissness in taking an Account from Time to Time of the several Goods, Wares, Merchandizes, &c. that were said to be made to the Corporation, and their neglecting to enquire into the Reality and Value of them, and to inspect into their Warehouses.

Nay, their Omission seems to be wilful, and calculated on purpose to defraud the Members of the said Corporation, thereby to aggrandize their ill-got Wealth ; I say, it *seems* to be so, though perhaps others may with very good Reason proceed to a further Length, and affirm that there is the strongest Presumption in the World, to believe that they premeditated and combined to cheat those who were concerned in the Profits arising, or which ought to have arose from the Management of the Corporation's Affairs, provided that the same had been transacted with Fidelity and Honesty. As a further Corroboration of what I have here laid

laid down, after Mr. *Clarke*, who was Surveyor of the Pledges deposited in the Corporation's House in *Fenchurch-Street*, had made a Report, that the Pledges in the said Warehouse were insufficient to answer what was said to have been lent upon them, they turn'd him out, without enquiring into the Truth of what he had reported, (for no doubt, but that they very well knew they could not contradict, or falsify him in any one Article) and did not appoint another to succeed him; so that by this indirect Method they furnished *John Thomson*, one of their Accomplices, with many Opportunities to defraud the said Corporation. Here I must observe to you, that the Cashier every *Tuesday* should give in a weekly Account of all the Cash received and issued, and produce the Ballance then in his Hands; and though this was declared a standing Order, yet it was never duly observed. In the Month of *May* 1726, a Surveyor, as before-mentioned, was appointed to inspect the Warehouses, and to give a weekly Report to the Committee of all the Pledges there, with his Observations upon them; but in *September* following, this necessary Officer, who was a Cheque upon the Warehouse-keeper *Thomson*, was discharged, and no other appointed to succeed him. The Cashier had one Key, the Accomptant had another, and *Thomson* a third, with different Locks to them, but the Keys of the two former were
 taken

taken away, and directed to be delivered to one *Lovel*, a Messenger to the Company, by *Thomson's* own Motion; but even this Shadow of Cheque was never put in Execution, for all the Keys remained in the said *Thomson's* own Hands till the Day of his Departure. The Accomptant, or Cashier, was ordered to give in a weekly Account to the Register of all Notes issued on Pledges, with their Numbers, Sums and Dates; it was afterwards order'd that all Pledges, made to the Corporation, should be enter'd in a Book, to be laid upon the Table as often as the Committee of Accompts, or the Gentlemen of the Day, who attended in the House, should meet; and that the Date of the Times when each Pledge was taken in, and the Place where it was deposited, as also of the Redemption or Renewal of the same, should be set forth in that Account.

If these necessary Cheques had been observed, had not some of them (by express Order) been taken away, and all of them render'd ineffectual, the Affairs of the Corporation could never have been reduced to the unhappy Situation they were in at the Time of *Thomson's* withdrawing himself beyond Sea.

But this is not all: *Thomson*, not satisfied with the whole Trust reposed in him, as to the Pledges, the Cash he thought ought to be in his Hands too; and truly a better Method

thod could not have been devised to effect it than that which was taken. The Committee suffer'd him to certify for himself; there is now no body left to inspect the Warehouse, and so *John Thomson* certifies for *John Thomson*, that he has left such a Pledge in the Warehouse, *i. e.* with himself, worth so much, and this was allowed to the amount of Thousands at a Time.

Is it not agreeable to common Reason, that the Managers were bound to look into the Behaviour of the Under-Servants, whom they had placed in their several Stations? Surely it will be allowed, that they ought to have done this from the Tie of the Trust that was reposed in them, and from the particular Obligation of the Choice they had made; and though it cannot be expected that the Directors should be answerable for every Slip of those they took into the Service of the Company, yet every rational Man will conceive it to have been incumbent on them, to have had a careful Eye over their Actions; and if through the Negligence of the Managers, Servants have had Opportunities of defrauding the Company, such Directors could not reasonably hope a Pardon; or could they expect to escape unpunished, if those Frauds were carried on by their Connivance, or if they conspired with them to embezzle the Company's Stock, or appropriate any Part, more or less, to their own Uses, which has been proved upon them.

But perhaps it may be asked by way of Objection to what I have said, how came these Men, the *Rump* of a Committee and Assistants, to be invested with such Power? To this I answer, that they had no legal Power; that they acted by Usurpation, and in a base, scandalous and private Manner. 'Tis true indeed, that in the Year 1725, the General Court came to a Resolution to proceed upon the Business of the Corporation, *viz.* to lend Money upon Pledges, to hire Warehouses, to make By-Laws, appoint Officers, and perform all other Things that were necessary; and a Committee was appointed to do all these, and to lay them before the said General Court for their Approbation and Consent. But they proceeded to appoint Officers, and change them at their Pleasure, and to make Orders for the Management of the said Corporation's Affairs, without communicating the same to the General Court, or having their Approbation; from whence it evidently appears that they acted in a very arbitrary and unjustifiable Manner.

They permitted the Borrowers to transact Business for them by their Agents, and truly these Agents were the Servants of the Corporation, who no doubt found their Account in negotiating the Affairs of the Borrowers, and procured for them, as it is high probable, more Money than they could otherwise have procured upon their Pledges. I must here observe to you, that one *Richard*

C

Woolley

Woolley and *Thomas Warren* were the Agents, and likewise aiding and assisting to, and notorious Accomplices with the before-mentioned *John Thomson*, who was empower'd by the said Committee, by a Writing under any one of their Hands, to lend one or two thousand Pounds upon a single Pledge, or any further Sum at his Discretion; so that by this Method of proceeding, he might draw upon the Cashire for what Sums he pleased, pretending that he had sufficient Security in his Hands for the same.

Upon an Examination of the Entries made in the Books of the said Corporation, in the Year 1725, it appears that there is lent upon Pledges as there charged the Sum of three hundred and sixty nine thousand and sixty nine Pounds, eleven Shillings and eight Pence Farthing; but upon a strick Enquiry and Survey taken of the goods which were found in the Warehouses, and ought to have answered that Sum at least, they amounted to no more, upon Valuation impartially made, than forty thousand Pounds. In the Month of *February* 1731, the Capital Stock of the *Charitable* Corporation amounted to three hundred fifty three thousand eight hundred and seventeen Pounds ten Shillings, and in Notes and Bonds issued forth by the *trusty* Committee-Men and Assistants, and then standing out, was one hundred and forty five thousand eight hundred and seventeen Pounds.

Would

Would not any reasonable Man expect that the most diligent Care ought to have been taken in the Management of such large Sums of Money, and that they ought to have had Pledges and other Securities to satisfy the Principal and legal Interest? but the contrary happened, for upon an Inspection into the Pledges, which ought to have made good the same, they amounted to no more than seventy seven thousand five hundred and seven Pounds, three Shillings and Two-pence Three Farthings, so that there remains a Loss of four hundred and twenty one thousand eight hundred twenty five Pounds, Six Shillings and Nine-pence One Farthing.

Thus, Sir, you see what a large Sum of Money has been lost or embezzled by the Negligence, Fraud, or Connivance of those Committee-Men and Assistants, who took upon them the Care and Management of the Corporation's Affairs; and who in Equity and Justice should be responsible for, and make good the Loss sustained by the unfortunate Adventurers, but those very Committee-Men, Assistants, and their Copartners, Agents, and Accomplices, as far as their Estates and Effects will extend, who have plunder'd so many of their Fellow-Subjects, and Shipwreck'd innumerable Families? A Parliamentary Emetic is the only Specific to make those ravenous Animals disgorge what they have so voraciously taken,

They have strip'd poor People to the very Skin to feed their insatiable *Avarice*, and managed their Affairs in the most clandestine Manner, committing Extravagancies that would make them liable to the severest Stroke of Justice in any other Country ; and I think truly that their best Comfort is not to *survive* their Destiny, and their greatest Misery will be, if they *out-live* themselves, to see their Families *buried* in their Ruins, and all the Advantages of their Fortune turned against them, like an Army dissipated with the Fury of its own Cannon.

Surely I may say, without being charg'd to speak rashly, that the *Innocency* of those *Dragooning* Committee-Men, Assistants and A complices, did not last so long in the *Charitable* Corporation as the first Man's did in the *terrestrial Paradise*, though they were not *wicked* before, yet they believed they ought to be *so*, and therefore resolved to rid themselves of their *Consciences*, that with less *Incumbrance*, they might cram their Purfes with the Spoils of those whose Money they had under their Management. They looked upon themselves to be rare *Alchymists*, and expected nothing less than the *Philosopher's Stone*, when they had set so many *Furnaces* on Work; but would not one think it *Bedlam Folly*, that Men, sufficiently warned by Experience of their own Times, should adventure on the *like dangerous Precipices*, on which all that went before broke their Necks? But we must remember that *Ava-*
rice

vice deludes the Imagination, and never permits its Votaries to look down on the *Wrecks*, *shatter'd Fortunes*, and *infamous Memories* of their Predecessors. Few have the Wisdom to foresee how hard it is in the Management of much Treasure to pursue *honest* and *safe* Maxims, and what Resolution is required for them to be *innocent*. Their Courses were violent, their Pace was *full Speed*, all to them was *Plunder*, all *Prey*; they first *rifled the Ship* they sailed in, and then wilfully *stranded her*, in hopes to conceal their own *Robberies*; in short, having undermined the *Fortress*, they by piece-meals dismantled it, the whole Frame shak'd, and they would assuredly have laid it in a heap of Ruins, had they not been timely discovered; and I make no doubt, but they would have greatly rejoiced to have seen their Warehouses, with all the Effects in them, and the Books of Accompts in a Flame, if they could have trip'd off in the *Combustion* with the Spoils they had taken. Can these Men expect less than the *Execrations* of all those unhappy Sufferers, who are reduced to a State of Beggary by their Frauds and Corruption?

The Scheme of their iniquitous Proceedings had been carried on for some Years, and to enumerate all the *Wiles* and *Artifices*, all the *little mean* Shifts they used to seduce and draw in unwary Persons to purchase Shares, would swell this Letter to a large Volume. If they could find out a young Gentle.

Gentlewoman who had a Fortune, they presently *worm'd* themselves into her Acquaintance, and under a Mask of Friendship, would daily *buz* into her Ears the great Profit that she might make of her Money by placing it in the *Charitable Corporation*; nor did they desist 'till the poor credulous Maiden, buoy'd up with the Hopes and Expectation of increasing her Portion, follow'd their pernicious Counsel. They laugh'd in their Sleeves to see how they had trepan'd her, and impos'd upon her Ignorance, and she (too late, alas!) was made sensible of her Error.

Happy, thrice happy had it been for many Families, if the Charter of the *Charitable Corporation* had been disannull'd in the last Sessions of Parliament, according to the Prayer of the Petition of those worthy Citizens, who requested that the said Charter might be abloished.

The lending larger Sums of Money upon Pledges than any Goldsmith or other Person would have done, was attended with pernicious Consequences that affected the Trading Part of the Nation, and gave great Encouragement to many, who before were *honest* and *industrious*, to *cheat* their Creditors, and run into *Extravagance*. It was a common Practice to take up Wares, or whatever Commodities they lik'd best, and give Notes payable at the Expiration of six Months, and presently convey those Commodities to the Warehouse of the *Charitable Corporation*,

Corporation, where they by themselves, or their Agents, pledg'd them for very near the Sum which they ought to have paid for them; but when the Creditors came in Expectation of receiving the Money due to them, to their great Surprize and Disappointment, their Debtors, who before used to make punctual Payments, declared themselves to be insolvent, or else absconded; they knew that a Commission of Bankruptcy might set them free, or in case they fail'd therein, then their *dernier Resort* was to withdraw to *France* or *Holland*, where they were sure of meeting with good Encouragement, if they would work.

Thus, Sir, you see that the fair Traders became Sufferers by the Mismanagement of the Committee-Men, and the Assistants of the *Charitable Corporation*, though no ways personally concerned with them; the Nation likewise suffer'd by being deprived of its Handy-Craftsmen and other Tradesmen; and their working in foreign Countries, and teaching their Arts to others, must necessarily have occasion'd a Diminution of our Trade.

I might mention many other Inconveniences and Disadvantages that have accrued from their lending such large Sums upon Pledges; but shall trouble you only with one more at present, which is this, it has encouraged several Persons, as well of *high* as *low* Rank and Figure, to pawn their Jewels, Plate, and other Moveables, to support

port their excessive Gaming, or to discharge such Debts as were contracted by Gaming. Here I have a fair Opportunity of declaiming against that pernicious Vice, which is now so much in Vogue, but this may be look'd upon as foreign to my Subject, and some will be apt to say, that we have salutary Laws to abate that shameful Itch, that is now grown epidemical: I allow this to be true, and heartily wish that those Laws were strictly executed; however, I hope it may be agreeable at least to mention the Decree of *Alphonfus*, the Son of *Ferdinando* King of *Spain*, when he created the Knights of the Order of the *Band*, (he and all his Children being of the same Order) he ordained that no *Knight* should presume to play for any Money at Cards or Dice, or give his Consent, or connive at any such Play in his House, upon Pain of forfeiting his Salary for one Month, and himself to be banish'd from the Court for the space of another Month and an half.

I cannot refrain from mentioning an unparallel'd piece of Arrogance and Haughtiness in one of the Servants of the *Charitable Corporation*; a poor industrious Milk-Woman, having saved as much Money (the Fruit of many a Morning's and Evening's hard Labour) as purchas'd a Share in the said Corporation, into which she was unhappily cajol'd, hoping it might turn to a good Account for the Sake of her poor Children; hearing what Embezzlements had been made,

made, and fearing with too much Reason that she should lose her *All*, ask'd the above-mentioned Fellow what she should do? the Brute, grinning like an *Ape*, answer'd, *I know not what you should do, but take a Rope and hang yourself.*—Think you not that this Wretch would have made a second *Nero*, if he had the same Power? no doubt, but if the Woman *winced* under his Rods, he would have *scourged* her with *Scorpions*; and if her *Tears* grew troublesome, he would have washed them away with her *Blood*; for he reckoned it a Weakness in him to regard the *Sighs* and *Groans* of the Widow and the Orphans.

The Sufferers finding that their Grievances could not be redress'd by any other Method than by Application to Parliament, petitioned the Honourable House of Commons for Relief, who, to their eternal Honour be it said, not only received their Petition, but in hopes of making as good a Cure as could possibly be done, probed the Ulcer to the Bottom, and applied the most healing Plaister that they in their great Wisdom and Judgment could contrive.

Thomson and *Squire*, the latter one of the Court of Assistants, the other the Warehouse-keeper, fled beyond Sea, being apprehensive of a Parliamentary Inquiry, but left many of the *Corporation's* Books behind, which, questionless, have contributed much to open the wicked Scene; and as *Thomson* has not surrender'd himself at the Day ap-
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pointed, he now stands as a Felon convict. He has carried with him large Sums in Money, Notes, Jewels, and other Effects belonging to the *Charitable Corporation*, and those who were concerned therein; and though the Right Honourable Sir *Robert Sutton* wrote to his Correspondent at *Paris*, and procured Letters from the Secretaries of State to the Ministers residing at foreign Courts, to cause the said *Thomson* to be secured, yet so speedy was he in his Flight, that he arrived safe at *Rome*.

I know not any thing more common in Nature than, when one Accomplice in fraudulent Actions has sav'd himself by Flight, for the others to charge him with all the Guilt; just so it happens with *Thomson*; they with whom he acted in Copartnerhip, and was an Accomplice, would saddle all the Loss that has been sustain'd, and the Embezzlements that have been made, upon him, hoping thereby to ease themselves of their own Load. But let every Man bear his own Burthen; *Thomson* has as much as he can stand under, and that he has been as notoriously guilty as any of them, is what (I believe) no Man will offer to gain-say; but I see no Reason why he should be charged with the Delinquencies of others, who are as deep in the Mire as he is.

I have another Thing, Sir, with which I must acquaint you, which has surprized many, and afforded much Laughter to others, I mean a Letter written from *Rome*,
dated

dated *May 4, 1732. N.S.* which was directed to the Committee, to whom the Petition of the Proprietors of the Charitable Corporation for the Relief of industrious Poor, by assisting them with small Sums upon Pledges at legal Interest, assembled in their General Court, was referred; or in case the said Committee did not subsist, to Sir *Robert Sutton*, Sir *John Shadwell*, *Walter Molsworth*, Doctor *John Mowbray*, or some one of them at *London*, and signed *John Angelo Belloni*, which was enclos'd to Sir *Robert Sutton's* Correspondent at *Paris*, from whom the said Sir *Robert* receiv'd, and deliver'd it according to the first Part of its Directions.

This Letter is calculated to impose upon the Parliament, and under a pretended Notion of Friendship, to beguile those who have been Losers by the *Charitable Corporation*; it is a glaring Libel, and begins with an Air of Authority, asserting that *John Thomson* is secured in the Castle of *St. Angelo*, though some People look upon it to be a Contrivance of the said *Thomson*, for an Offer is made therein of restoring the Books and Papers of *Thomson*, upon Compliance with some Things which are there propos'd, but yet does not pretend to give up the said *Thomson* upon any Account; and yet, with a specious Pretence, it is insinuated that he is imprison'd for the Crimes he has committed; and what corroborates the Opinion of many, that it is a fictitious Letter of *Thomson's* own framing, is, that it aims at

nothing but to get an Indemnification for himself and his Accomplices, without making any Restitution or Satisfaction to the Persons that are injur'd. In short, the whole is a mere Rhapsody, a factious and confus'd Heap of down-right Insolence and Abuse.

Both Houses of Parliament resented this Letter with a Spirit and Zeal of true *Britons*, and sincere Lovers of their King and Country; and having to their everlasting Glory condemned it to the Flames, (the Fate it merited) it was this Day burnt at the *Royal Exchange*, by the Hands of the Common-Hangman, in the Presence of the Sheriffs of *London*, who were order'd to see the same put in Execution. Numerous were the Croud of Spectators on this Occasion, who with chearful Countenances, and repeated Huzza's, and with repeated Acclamations of *Long live King George*, expreis'd their entire Satisfaction; and as a further Testimony of the Citizens Joy on this Occasion, a Peal was rung with the twelve musical Bells, set up in the Steeple of *St. Michael's Church in Cornhill*.

I am thoroughly persuaded, that this Affair will make a great Noise in *Rome*, the like not having happen'd for many Years, and therefore occasion many to be the more inquisitive about it, especially when they hear that it was done by the *unanimous* Orders of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons of *Great Britain*. I promise myself, that it will not be acceptable to
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the Enemies of our most Gracious Sovereign King GEORGE the Second; but yet will rejoice his *loyal* Subjects abroad, as it has done those at home; and more particularly when they shall be inform'd with what Zeal, Chearfulness, and Loyalty, both Houses of Parliament so harmoniously concurr'd to shew their Resentment against a Transaction that clandestinely reflected upon their Country; as if Transgressors, of what Station so ever, would be permitted to go unpunish'd. I have therefore been as concise in my Narration as the Subject would permit, and hope I have enabled you thereby to satisfy any Inquirer in relation to these Facts, which has been the sole Motive of giving you the Trouble of a long Letter at this Juncture, which I hope will be seasonable, and that you will look upon it as coming from,

S I R,

London, Friday,
May, 1732.

*Your sincere Friend,
and most humble Servant.*

P. S. If the late Managers of the Corporation's Affairs had acted with that Uprightness and Integrity as they ought to have done, particularly in regard to the Oath they had taken, they might have with Ease prevented *Thomas Hodgson*, a Servant of *George Robinson*, from borrowing (as charged) no less than twenty two thousand Pounds in one Day, and *Nathaniel Lovel*, a menial Servant,

Servant, from borrowing (as he is enter'd) no less than two thousand five hundred Pounds another Day. Besides, by their neglecting to inspect the Accompts, pursuant to the Trust reposed in them, *Richard Woolley, Thomas Warren, Francis Thomson, John Thomson, Thomas Thomson, George Robinson, Thomas Hodgson, Thomas Lease, Nathaniel Lovel, David Avery, Thomas Jones, James Graham, and George Crookshanks*, one half of them Persons belonging to the Corporation, and most of the rest wholly unknown, are Borrowers of no less, in Principal and Interest, than three hundred sixty four thousand four hundred eighty nine Pounds, five Shillings and Six-pence. The Officers of the Corporation could not have run any great Lengths towards the Ruin of the Proprietors, had not the Directors (some through Ignorance, or supine Negligence, or indeed from worse Motives) contributed to it, by leaving every thing at their Discretion. Had the Managers, as they ought to have done, in common Justice to the Proprietors, and in Discharge of the Trust they had accepted, either from Time to Time inspected the Company's Books, or examin'd their Warehouses; nay, had they not most unwarrantably taken away those prudent Cheques upon the Officers, which upon the first Out-set of the Company were wisely instituted, these palpable Frauds and Abuses could not have been committed.

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The Managers, who enter'd into a Co-partnership to enrich themselves by pillaging the Proprietors, labour'd to be chosen Directors, with the Industry of Men who were seeking Places of Profit, not of Trust; and were so assiduous in their Business, whilst the Warehouse-keeper *Thomson* continued in his Office, and whilst the Company's Cash was not quite exhausted, that they could then attend their Affairs punctually, and rather than fail one Day, hold their Meetings even on *Sundays*; but when the Scene was alter'd, and the Cash vanish'd, their Diligence vanish'd with it.

At their last Re-Election, they accepted the Trust of the Company's Affairs with much Reluctance, for they were sure they could find no further Advantage in it; and since that Time, they wholly deserted the Service of the Corporation, nor would they condescend to attend at the Board, in order to the Redemption of the few remaining Pledges, or to the Sale of the Goods liable to receive Damage by their Neglect. Nay, what carries with it the *blackest* Aspect on their Side is, that they disregarded, and artfully slighted repeated Summons's to attend the pressing Business of the Office, as well as the affixing the Sale to the Proprietors Petition to the Honourable *House of Commons*. In a Word, the *South-Sea Directors*, though they exceeded the *Plunderers* of the *Charitable Corporation* in the Weight of their Offences, yet they fell

fell short of them in Measure; for the former left the *Capital* behind them, but the latter destroy'd the *Root*, leaving only a few *Branches* to be divided among those who would be satisfied with the *Leaves*.

F I N I S



